

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 was rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph. These rejections are respectfully traversed and should be withdrawn in light of the Amendment.

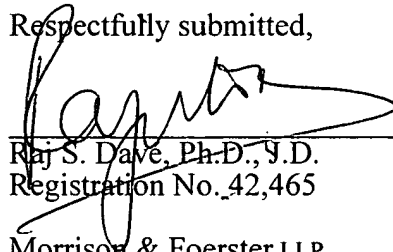
All of the claim amendments are in accordance with the Examiner. Also, all of the claims amendments except that of claim 5 are self-explanatory. In claim 5, "a purity higher than 3N" has been changed to "a purity higher than 99.9%." Persons skilled in this art would immediately recognize that "3N" means "99.9%." For example, U.S. Pat. No. 5,336,378 states, "The high-purity nickel used in the present invention has a purity of from 3N (99.9 wt %) to 4N (99.99 wt %)" and also recites "A method for producing a high-purity titanium according to claim 1, wherein the raw material of titanium has a purity of from 3N to 4N" in claim 2. A quick search of the USPTO patent database using the query "purity 3N" identified 23 U.S. patents with this phrase. A search on Yahoo with the same query showed that Materials Data Sheets often cite the purity of a material in terms of "3N" to refer to a purity of 99.9%. For example, see <http://www.tsmd.com/tsprod/tsp3ndt.htm>, which states, "Tosoh SMD offers 3N Hot Isostatically Pressed Chromium as the standard product for most applications" and further states that the "Absolute Purity" is "99.9%." In short, the amendment of claim 5 by replacing "3N" to "99.9%" does not introduce new matter because "3N" would have been understood by persons skilled in this art to mean "99.9%."

There are no rejection over the prior art.

In light of this Amendment, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited.

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this request and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that a fee is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 300602002200.**

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Respectfully submitted,

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